Integrating Climate Change into your Curriculum

Amy Chovnick
March 10, 2020 Flex Day
Clicker Question

Which of the following best describes you?

A. I teach climate change in my class- it is part of the course outline
B. I teach climate change in my class even though it is not part of the course outline
C. I don’t teach climate change
D. I have thought about teaching climate change
Source: 2019 NPR/Ipsos polls of 1,007 U.S. adults conducted March 21-22 and 505 teachers conducted March 21-29. The credibility interval for the overall sample is 3.5 percentage points; parents, 7.3 percentage points; and teachers, 5.0 percentage points. Totals may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding. Credit: Alyson Hurt/NPR
Life altering topic they are not teaching in school
Colleges too are not preparing students to deal with the consequences of climate change.

- Climate change was optional to learn about
- Only briefly covered in class
- Presented as up for debate
- Not mentioned at all
- Students who do learn about it feel outraged that they didn’t learn about it earlier or that it is not required
The Fossil Fuel Industry has been directing the narrative:

Science Skepticism

Denial - it doesn’t exist

Occurring but it’s a natural predictable phenomenon

Occurring but it is not anthropogenic

Yes, we are causing it but there is nothing we can do
Think Pair Share
What are the barriers to teaching Climate Change?

- Lack of expertise
- Relevance to discipline—leave it to natural sciences
- Politically risky
- No time
“The fact that we’re leaving climate discussions primarily to the natural sciences is itself part of the problem”

Jennifer Atkinson

“I don’t want your hope. I don’t want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic and act like your house is on fire.”

Greta Thunberg
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Ideas from other schools

Brainstorming

Share Out

Moving forward
UC Berkeley Interdisciplinary Approach

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE FUTURE OF CALIFORNIA

FOREST ECOLOGIST, ECOSYSTEM SCIENTIST, CIVIL ENGINEER, LAWYER CO-TEACH

“BIG IDEAS” CLASS THAT ANY MAJOR CAN TAKE”
University of Washington - Jennifer Atkinson

COURSE: ECO GRIEF AND CLIMATE ANXIETY

USES POETRY, FILM AND ARTS

“UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE HAS BECOME A BASIC LITERACY THAT’S NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE 21ST CENTURY.”
An “Overlay” is a CSUEB graduation requirement fulfilled by completing an approved course.

SLOs:
- Identify the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability, either in general or in relation to a specific problem.
- Analyze interactions between human activities and natural systems.
- Describe key threats to environmental sustainability.
CSU Sustainability Pathways

- Chico State - **earn a certificate or minor while earning GE**
- Northridge - **Principles of Sustainability**
- Bakersfield - **GE theme S: Sustainability and Justice**
- San Luis Obispo - **University Learning Objective**
Brainstorming Session
Additional Resources

- Teach Climate Change with These Graphs
- Teaching Climate Change Best Practices- National Center for Science Ed
- NOAA Planet Stewards Education Project
- Sustainability in CSU- The first Assessment of the 2014 Policy
- Incorporating Climate Change in Medical School Curriculum
Closing Remarks